

Honorable Committee,

I'm a first year resident at Western Connecticut State University. I'm from the neighboring town of New Milford and major in Political Science.

Since the start of my time at WCSU, my education has been plagued by the debt that haunts the school. Late in my first semester, the possibility of my major being cut was very, very real. Let me make it clear – if my major was not offered at WCSU, me and many people in my area would prefer to go shortly across state lines into New York rather than commute elsewhere in Connecticut in an attempt to get the education we have the right to.

The ghost of budget cuts haunts us in other ways, too. The day I moved into my dorm it was unbearably hot, as it is in these New England summers. My dorm room was on the 3rd floor, we (me and my two physically limited parents) had to lug things like fridges and blankets and clothes up 3 flights of stairs because the Elevator hadn't been fixed since the earlier **Spring semester** when it was broken. Not only this, there was no air conditioning in any dorm room. The reason for this? There isn't enough money to afford to cool the whole building. My parents were forced to overexert themselves and then were forced to help unpack in a hot, stuffy dorm room. My mother almost passed out. It was so hot those following weeks I commuted home in order to get proper sleep, since it never cooled down at night.

And then, the food. To live on campus, the University requires us to buy the most expensive meal plan, at least in our first year. No one I know uses all 5 of the meal swipes per day – because the food is so low in quality we would rather starve than deal with the stomach pains and fitful sleeps. The university simply can't afford high quality food – upperclassmen has told me how many things like toppings and even some meats have been cut in order to save money.

Working with the student radio WXCI and the Student Publications – students have attended the State of the Union, the Superbowl, and Gov. Lamont's address to the state. *This* is the student body that resides in the university despite the ghost of budget cuts; students who are going to every branch of the government and American culture, who when asked say "*my home is in Connecticut.*"

When you cut the budget, you're losing these students. Believe me, they'll go to New York, to Massachusetts, New Jersey – wherever else. You won't hear an interviewer say; "*We're in Danbury, Connecticut*" sir. Instead it's Boston, or Albany, or D.C.